163

TWO DISCOURSES:

THE FIRST,

Of Preaching CHRIST;

THE SECOND,

Of particular and experimental PREACHING.

BY THE LATE

REV. MR. *JOHN JENNINGS.*

With a PREFACE by the

REV. DR. *ISAAC WATTS.*

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A LETTER concerning the moſt uſeful Way of Preaching; written in the *German* Language by the late Reverend and Celebrated Dr. AUGUSTUS HERMANNUS FRANCK, Profeſſor of Divinity in the Univerſity of *Hall* in *Saxony*, Paſtor of a Church, and Director of the charitable FOUNDATIONS there. Tranſlated into *Latin* by Order of his Son, the preſent Profeſſor FRANCK, and out of the *Latin* into *Engliſh* by DAVID JENNINGS, D. D.

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1 Cor. ii. 2. *I determined not to know any Thing among you, ſave Jeſus Chriſt.*——2 Tim. ii. 15. *A Workman that needeth not to be aſhamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth.*

EDINBURGH:

PRINTED FOR CAMPBELL AND WALLACE, LUCKENBOOTHS.

M.DCC.XCIII.

MINISTERS

OF THE SEVERAL

CONGREGATIONS

OF

PROTESTANT DISSENTERS

BRITISH MUSEUM

THEIR ADDRESSES

humbly inscribed and submitted

To the United

MINISTERS

of the several

CONGREGATIONS

of

PROTESTANT *DISSENTERS*

In the Counties of

Leiceſter, Northampton, Warwick, and *Rutland;*

THESE DISCOURSES

Are humbly inſcribed and ſubmitted

By their affectionate Brother,

and Fellow-labourer,

JOHN JENNINGS.

TESTIMONIES *of the Reverend Dr.* BATES *and Mr.* BAXTER *to the Deſign of theſe* DISCOURSES.

HE preached Chriſt crucified our only *wiſdom and righteouſneſs, ſanctification and redemption.* His deſign was to convince ſinners of their abſolute want of *Chriſt*, that with flaming affections they might come to him, and from *his fulneſs receive* divine *grace.* This is to water the tree at the root, whereby it becomes flouriſhing and fruitful; whereas the laying down of moral rules for the exerciſe of virtue, and ſubduing vicious affections, without directing men to derive ſpiritual ſtrength by prayer, and in the uſe of divine ordinances, from the Mediator the fountain of all grace; and without repreſenting his love as the moſt powerful motive and obligation to obedience, is but *pure philoſophy*, and the higheſt effect of it is but *unregenerate morality.*

Dr. BATES, *in his* Funeral SERMON *on Dr.* JACOMB.

All our work muſt be done *ſpiritually.*—— There is in ſome mens preaching a ſpiritual ſtrain, which ſpiritual hearers can diſcern and relliſh: And in ſome mens, this ſacred tincture is ſo wanting, that even when they ſpeak of *ſpiritual things*, the manner is ſuch as if they were *common matters.*

Mr. BAXTER, *in his* Gildas Salvianus, *C.* III.

THE

THE

PREFACE.

WHEN I ſee a book well written for the *inſtruction of mankind*, I always hope it will ſpread its good influences as far and wide as it finds readers. But when I meet with a valuable treatiſe, whoſe deſign is to improve the ſacred *ſkill of preaching*, I am ready to perſuade myſelf, "Surely this "will become a more extenſive bene-"fit; and the good influences of it "will reach as many whole aſſemblies "of men, as there are miniſters who "ſhall happen to read it." For this reaſon I cannot but take a ſpecial ſatisfaction in recommending theſe *Two Diſcourſes* to the world, which, in my opinion, are founded upon the general principles of Chriſtianity, and therefore invite the peruſal of all, being written without the narrow ſpirit of a party. They ſeem to be calculated for the common good, nor have I obſerved any thing in them that can juſtly give diſ-

guſt, or awaken any reaſonable reſentment.

It muſt be confeſſed, without controverſy, that there are ſome things wherein ſeveral of the preachers of the *preſent time* have the advantage of our learned and pious fathers: But there are other excellencies in the ſermons of the *Puritanical age*, which I would rejoice to find more ſtudiouſly revived and cultivated in our day. Among theſe I know none of more eminent neceſſity, glory, and uſefulneſs, than thoſe *two* which are the ſubjects of this little book; I mean the *evangelical turn of thought* that ſhould run through our miniſtry, and the *experimental way of diſcourſe* on practical ſubjects.

It hath been juſtly obſerved, that where a great and univerſal neglect of *preaching Chriſt* hath prevailed in a Chriſtian nation, it hath given a fatal occaſion to the growth of *Deiſm* and *Infidelity*; for when perſons have heard the ſermons of their clergy, for many years together, and find little of *Chriſt* in them, they have taken it into their heads, that men may be very good men,

men, and go ſafe to heaven, without *Chriſtianity*; and therefore, though they dwell in a land where the goſpel is profeſſed, they imagine there is no need they ſhould be *Chriſtians*. But what a blot and reproach would it be to our miniſtry, if *Infidels* and *Heathens* ſhould multiply among us, through ſuch a woful neglect of preaching the *peculiar doctrines of Chriſt*?

Beſides, let us conſider how little hath been our *ſucceſs* in compariſon of the multitudes converted by our fathers in the day of their miniſtry. Hath not this been matter of ſore complaint theſe many years paſt? Now it is worth our inquiry, whether it may not be aſcribed to the *abſence of Chriſt* in our ſermons. And what reaſon, indeed can we have to expect the *preſence* and influence of the *Spirit of Chriſt*, if we leave his perſon, his offices, his grace, and his goſpel, out of our diſcourſes, or give but a ſlight and caſual hint at theſe glorious ſubjects, which ought to be our daily theme? This is what our Author would put us in mind of in his *Firſt Diſcourſe*.

And

And perhaps another cauſe of our *want of ſucceſs* hath been this, That we have too much left off the way of our fathers, in diſtinguiſhing the characters of our hearers, and dividing the word aright to ſaints and ſinners, to the ſtupid and the profane, the awakened and convinced, the mournful and penitent, the preſumptuous and obſtinate, the deſerted and deſpairing.

This method appears eminently in the labours of the former age. Thoſe two great and good men, Mr. *Flavell* and Mr. *Baxter*, might be divided in their ſentiments on other ſubjects, but you find this conduct runs through all their practical writings. This is a great part of what the *Second Diſcourſe* here recommends to us, under the title of *Experimental Preaching*.

Our Author indeed aſſumes not ſo much to himſelf, as to addreſs any beſides *ſtudents* and *younger miniſters*. But if in the *middle age of life* we ſhould examine our performances by the light of this Treatiſe, it is poſſible we and our people might be gainers by it.

Have

Have we not been too often tempted to follow the *modiſh way*, and ſpeak to our hearers in general terms, as though they were all converted already, and ſufficiently made Chriſtians by a national profeſſion? Have not ſome of us ſpent our labour to build them up in the practice of duties, without teaching them to ſearch whether the foundation has been laid in an entire change and renovation of heart? Do we lead them conſtantly to inquire into the inward ſtate of their ſouls, the ſpecial tempers and circumſtances of their ſpirits, their peculiar difficulties, dangers, and temptations, and give them peculiar aſſiſtance in all this variety of the Chriſtian life?

With how much more efficacy does the word of God impreſs the conſcience, when every hearer finds himſelf deſcribed without the preacher's perſonal knowledge of him? When his own ſpiritual ſtate is painted to the life, and (as it were) ſet before his eyes in the language of the preacher? When a word of conviction, advice, or comfort, is ſpoken ſo pertinently to his own caſe,

that

that he takes it as directed to himself? How much more powerful and more penetrating will our sermons be, when those who *come into our assemblies* shall be *convinced and judged*, and have the *secrets of their hearts made manifest, and confess that God is in the midst* of us *of a truth*?

The perusal of these excellent *Discourses* in manuscript hath given me so much satisfaction, that I take a sensible pleasure to think that the press will communicate them to the world; and then I hope for a further share of profit, by keeping them always at my right hand when I am preparing for the service of the sanctuary. May the blessed Spirit of God teach those who enter into the sacred office, this holy skill of *winning* souls! May he awaken us all to see what may be mended in our ministrations, in order to publish the gospel of Christ with more illustrious and divine success!

LONDON, *June* 14. 1723.

I. WATTS.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THAT excellent Letter concerning the beſt method of Preaching, which ſtands annexed to this new edition of Mr. JENNINGS's Diſcourſes, was written in the *German* tongue by that venerable and apoſtolic man HERMAN AUGUSTUS FRANCK, late Profeſſor of Divinity at *Hall* in *Saxony*, and was communicated to me laſt Winter by his worthy Son GOTTHILF AUGUSTUS FRANCK, who happily fills and adorns the ſame poſt in that univerſity, and ſeems to be poſſeſſed of the ſame ſpirit of faith and love. It is now turned into *Engliſh* by my valuable friend Dr. DAVID JENNINGS, the ſurviving brother of the Author, who perfectly agreed with me in this ſentiment, that it ſhould be made public in our own language, and printed together with theſe Two Diſcourſes, as being eminently ſuited to promote the ſame deſign of an Experimental and Evangelical way of Preaching. And I perſuade myſelf that every reader who could reliſh and approve of what Mr. JOHN JENNINGS has written on this ſubject, will be very well pleaſed and entertained with the peruſal of this ſmall *eſſay* of that great man, Profeſſor FRANCK, on the ſame argument; and may both be attended with divine ſucceſs!

NEWINGTON, *Aug.* 28, 1736.

I. WATTS.

DISCOURSE I.

Of Preaching CHRIST.

ADDRESSED TO

YOUNGER MINISTERS.

Dear Friends and Brethren,

WE profeſs ourſelves Chriſtians, and are, I hope, upon careful and rational inquiry, ſatisfied that the religion of *Jeſus* comes from God; and that it is a moſt glorious diſpenſation, not only for the ſublime wonders of its doctrine, and the divine purity of its precepts, but that it excels all other religions in the ſtrength of its motives, the richneſs of its promiſes, and the ſufficiency of the divine aid attending it.

Now in all the peculiar glories of this religion, *Chriſt* is interwoven, like *Phidias*'s name in the ſhield, which could not be effaced

effaced without destroying the shield itself.

The doctrines concerning *Jesus* make the glory and advantage of his religion; and so run through the whole, that *preaching Christ*, and *preaching the gospel*, are, in scripture-style, synonymous terms: As in 1 *Cor.* i. 23.—ii. 2. and innumerable other places.

The *preaching of Christ* is our business, our charge, and our glory; but oh! *who is sufficient for these things?* Give me leave then, my dear brethren and friends, to remind myself and you, what regard a minister should have to our Redeemer in his preaching and other administrations.

1. *Let us make* Christ *the design and end of our preaching.* If we speak principally to please men; then are we not the servants of *Christ*. If we look no farther than our own humour, reputation, or temporal advantage, and expend our talents to our own private use, how shall we make up our accounts to our Master? and what reward can we expect from him?

Our ultimate end should be the personal glory of *Christ*. That the glory of *Christ* as God, is the ultimate end of the gospel, none can doubt: Nay, as a creature, he is in his perfections and felicity, far superior to the rest of the creation; so that it is laid

of this divine perſon, *Heb.* ii. 10. *All things are for him, as well as by him.* Is he not worth ten thouſand of us? More worth than the world? The only begotten Son of God, whom the higheſt angels adore? Now if the glory of *Chriſt*'s perſon, to the honour of the Father, be the principal end in the divine ſchemes and actings, it ſhould alſo be our higheſt view and deſign. Nor want we motives of gratitude to lead us to this: He is the founder of our religion, to whom all our hopes are owing: He has honoured us, and well deſerved that we ſhould honour him: Nor is there any danger of leſſening the honour of God the Father thereby, when we conſider him as the ſcriptures repreſent him, *as one with the Father, the equal image of the inviſible God, to the glory of God the Father.*

Again, as the glory of *Chriſt*'s perſon ſhould be our ultimate end; ſo the advancing the kingdom of his grace amongſt men, is to be the ſubordinate end.

The recovery of fallen creatures to holineſs and happineſs is the immediate deſign of the goſpel. Chriſt *is come into the world to ſave ſinners*, 1 Tim. i. 15. And he ſends us to preach his goſpel, that we might promote the ſame ſalvation, *That men might live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly, looking for that bleſſed hope*, Tit. ii. 11, 12, 13. To make men holy, to bring them to

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the faith of *Christ*, the imitation of him, and communion with him, here and hereafter, to the glory of the Father through *Christ*, must be the constant end of our preaching. We should not think it enough to inform, to amuse, to please, to affect, but we must aim farther than this, to bring them to trust in *Christ*, and withal, to make them penitent and holy; and every subject must be managed with this view: And let it be our great care, on a more speculative subject (as suppose one of the sublime doctrines of grace) still to keep the end in view, and apply it practically, or our labour is lost.

Let us by all means endeavour to save precious souls, but yet aim at a higher end than this, *viz.* that we ourselves may be *a sweet savour of Christ unto God*, 2 Cor. ii. 15. And then, though we miss of our secondary end, and are not, as we could wish, *the savour of life unto life*, unto any great number; yet in being the *savour of death unto death to them that perish*, we shall be instruments of glorifying the justice and long-suffering of *Christ*, and be witnesses for God, *that there has been a prophet amongst them*; our primary end is answered, *our labour is with the Lord*, and we in the mean time are supported, *though Israel be not gathered, for the word shall not return empty*.

Nay farther, it is not enough that the ſtrain of our preaching is adapted to the true deſign of the goſpel, but we muſt at heart ſincerely intend it; otherwiſe, though our diſcourſes be unexceptionable, yet if our deſigns be wrong and baſe, though others be ſaved through our miniſtry, *we ſhall be caſtaways.*

II. *Let Chriſt be the matter of our preaching.* Let us diſplay the divine dignity and lovelineſs of his perſon, by the light of his word, as *God manifeſt in the fleſh.*

Let us unfold his mediatorial office, the occaſion, deſign, and purport of his great undertaking.

Let us remind our hearers of the particulars of his incarnation, life, death, reſurrection, aſcenſion, and interceſſion.

Let us ſet forth the characters he bears, as a prophet, prieſt, and king; as a ſhepherd, captain, advocate, and judge.

Let us demonſtrate and ſhew the ſufficiency of his ſatisfaction, the tenor and excellence of the covenant confirmed with and by him, our juſtification by his righteouſneſs, adoption through our relation to him, ſanctification by his Spirit, our union with him as our head, and ſafe conduct by his providence; and how pardon, grace, and glory accrue to the elect through his ſuretiſhip and ſacrifice, and are diſpenſed by his hand.

Let

Let us in his name declare and explain his moſt holy laws, and teach the people whatever duties he has commanded, to God, our neighbour, and ourſelves.

Let us quicken the ſaints to duty, raiſe their hopes, eſtabliſh and comfort their ſouls, by the exceeding great and precious promiſes of his goſpel, which in him are *yea and amen.*

I but juſt give ſhort and imperfect hints of theſe things, and refer to the apoſtolical writings, which you will find are made up of diſcourſes on theſe and ſuch like topicks.

III. *Let the manner of our preaching on any ſubject, diſtinguiſh it from mere diſcourſes on natural religion, by a continual regard to Chriſt.*

If we are upon the perfections of God, let us conſider them as ſhining in his Son, and exemplified in his undertaking, *who is the brightneſs of his Father's glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon*, Heb. i. 3.

If we ſet forth goſpel bleſſings and promiſes, let us conſider them as purchaſed by a Saviour's blood, and diſtributed by his bounty; *For by his own blood he has obtained eternal redemption*, Heb. ix. 12. And *from him the whole body is ſupplied*, Eph. iv. 16.

If we take notice of the providence of God, let us not forget that *all power is given*

to Christ, in heaven and in earth, Mat. xxviii. 18. And that *he is head over all things for the church*, Ephes. i. 22.

If by the terrors of the last judgment we persuade men, let the *wrath of the Lamb* be denounced, and the dreadful reckoning for abused grace and a slighted Saviour; for *this is the condemnation*, John iii. 19.

If we are assisting the devotions of the people in confession, prayer, or praise, let their repentance spring from *looking on Christ whom they have pierced*, Zech. xii. 10. Let their faith in prayer fix steadily on *Jesus*, as to him is owing our acceptance and success, and *our boldness at the throne of grace* flows from regarding *Christ* as our great *high priest*, Heb. iv. 14. 16. And let us teach them to *give thanks to God the Father through him*, to whom it is owing that God is our Father, *Col.* iii. 17.

When we are upon the subject of duty, *Christ* is by no means to be forgotten; for to persuade men to practical godliness, is one of the most difficult parts of a minister's work. Men will hear with a curious satisfaction a speculative discourse, and with some joy attend to the displays of God's grace; nay, a *Felix* may tremble when judgment is preached: Many indeed will bear to hear of duty too; but to induce them to practise it, *hic labor, hoc opus*: Here we had need call in all helps, and take all advantages,

advantages, which the goſpel as well as the light of nature can furniſh. In other diſcourſes, we are rather attacking *Satan*'s out-works, a blind and prejudiced underſtanding; in practical ſubjects we aſſault *Satan*'s ſtrongeſt fort, a corrupted will: We may gain the underſtanding on our ſide, and gain ſome ſhare of the affections; but to ſubdue a perverſe will, and make men good practical Chriſtians, is not ſo eaſy a thing, that we can afford to ſpare any motive or quickening conſideration. But here I muſt be more particular in explaining how we ſhould regard *Chriſt* in preaching duty.

1. Let us repreſent duty as the natural and neceſſary fruit of faith in *Chriſt*, and love to him. When by faith we behold a crucified *Jeſus*, do we not tremble at the ſeverity of God's juſtice, and regret and hate thoſe ſins that occaſioned his ſorrows? When we farther conſider, that *by his ſtripes we are healed*, can we forbear *to love him who hath firſt loved us?* Shall we not *live to him who died for us?* Can we have the heart to *crucify him afreſh?* No, let us make his ſervice our buſineſs, his ſufficience our confidence, his life our example, and his bleſſings our portion and choice.

From ſuch actings of faith and outgoings of love, flows that divine temper which conſtitutes the new creature, and lays the foundation of all right goſpel-obedience.

Thus

Thus therefore let us continually trace gospel-duties up to their fountain-head, that the people may learn, it is not outward reformation that will stand the test in the day of judgment, but an inward renewal of the soul; that *the tree must first be made good, before there can be any good fruit;* and that all must be done for *Christ*'s sake, and flow from *faith working by love*, Gal. v. 6.

2. Let us enforce duties with motives respecting *Christ;* as grateful love to him should constrain us; as fear of his wrath should awe us; as we would approve ourselves the disciples and followers of *Christ;* as we would enjoy communion with him; as we would promote his honour and interest; and as we would have joy, and not confusion, at his appearing. Not that we should neglect any motives which the light of nature can furnish, and are level to the capacities of the people: We have need enough of all; but if we go no further than these, our exhortations will want far the greatest part of their weight: We must *beseech and exhort by the Lord Jesus*, 1 Thess. iv. 1.

3. Let us consider duties, as to be performed by the grace of *Christ:* Telling the people, that our fruitfulness depends on our being ingrafted into this vine; and that a holy walk is being *led by the Spirit;* and when we do good, it is *not we, but the grace*

of

of God that is in us; that out of a ſenſe of weakneſs, *we muſt be made ſtrong, and do all things through Chriſt ſtrengthening us*, Phil. iv. 13.

4. Let us conſider all good works as acceptable through the merits of *Chriſt*; and remind our hearers, that *could we do all, we were but unprofitable ſervants*; and that we muſt *ſeek to be found at laſt, not having on our own righteouſneſs, but that which is of God by faith*, Phil. iii. 9.

IV. *Let us deliver ourſelves in a ſtyle becoming the goſpel of* Chriſt: Not with *great ſwelling words of vanity*, or in the ſtyle of the Heathen Sophiſts, or words that *man's wiſdom teacheth*, and may perhaps ſound beſt in our own ears; but let us uſe *great plainneſs of ſpeech*, and ſeek to find out ſuch *acceptable words*, as may beſt reach the underſtanding and affections of the bulk of an auditory.

As for the affectionate part of a diſcourſe, brethren, I ſuppoſe, upon a view of ancient and modern learning, you allow that the men of the Eaſt, and next to them the ancient *Greeks*, excelled in fire, and works of the imagination; and that the moderns inhabiting milder weſtern climates, even the *French* (from whom upon many accounts we ſhould expect the moſt of this ſort) produce but an empty flaſh, in compariſon of

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the ſolid heat of the ancients, and rather amuſe us with little delicacies, than by maſterly ſtrokes command our whole ſouls. Now the ſcriptures are the nobleſt remains of what the Eaſt has produced, and much ſurpaſs the beſt of the *Greeks* in the force of their oratory: Let us take the ſpirit and ſtyle of them, and thence borrow bold figures and alluſions, ſtrong deſcriptions, and commanding addreſs to the paſſions. But I am prevented in all I would ſay on this ſo important head, by the Archbiſhop of *Cambray*'s *Dialogues concerning Eloquence*, which I am as little capable of improving upon, as I am of commending them as they deſerve.

And now, brethren, let me lay before you ſome reaſons and motives to back this friendly admonition concerning *preaching Chriſt*.

(I.) It is the way to have our labours accepted of *Chriſt*, and to have communion with him in our work:—Even *Paul* cries out, *Who is ſufficient for theſe things?* With how much more reaſon may we? Does not our cheerful progreſs in our work depend on a divine *afflatus*, and the Spirit diſpenſed by *Chriſt?* But if we take no notice of him in our preaching, and do not diſtinguiſh ourſelves from the moral philoſophers of the *Gentiles*, how can we expect any more of this enlivening and encouraging preſence of

Chriſt

Chriſt than they had; nay, we have leſs ground to expect it, if we wilfully ſlight and ſlur ſo noble a revelation, which they were never favoured with.

(II.) It is the way to win ſouls to *Chriſt*, and make lively Chriſtians. The ſucceſs of the goſpel is certainly no leſs owing to the power of its motives, than to the clearneſs, fulneſs, and purity of its precepts. Theſe peculiar motives of the goſpel have all ſuch a reſpect to *Chriſt*, that they are enervated if he be diſregarded: The goſpel-ſcheme is what God in his wiſdom has pitched upon to reform mankind, and ſave them; and he ſeems in honour concerned to crown it with greater ſucceſs than any other ſcheme whatſoever; *the preaching of Chriſt crucified is the power of God*, 1 Cor. i. 23, 24. If we maim the goſpel, and ſuppreſs a good part of it, we can expect but a very defective ſucceſs in the nature of things; nay, may we not fear God's honour is concerned in ſuch caſe to blaſt us, and we ſhall be like to labour almoſt in vain.

Obſervation agrees with this theory: The great maſters of reaſon, who have leſs regard to *Chriſt* in their preaching, may, indeed, have a charm for one of an hundred, who have a taſte of the beauties of fine reaſoning, and be of uſe to them, whilſt the bulk of an auditory is aſleep: Alas! with

with what heart can we go on, entertaining two or three, to the ſtarving of moſt of the ſouls in an auditory. May we not alſo obſerve a happier effect of a ſtrain prudently evangelical on Chriſtians themſelves; that they who ſit under it are more lively, zealous, ready to every good work, and heavenly-minded, than thoſe Chriſtians who have heard leſs of the goſpel.

(III.) It is a direct imitation of the apoſtles of *Chriſt*. *Chriſt* himſelf, whilſt upon earth, preached the goſpel in parables, in a concealed manner, diſtantly and with reſerve: He could not ſo fully take the advantage of his reſurrection, ſatisfaction, aſcenſion, and the like, not yet done, made, or proved: He had many things to ſay, which his diſciples could not then bear; but he declares them afterward by his Spirit in his apoſtles: They therefore are the true pattern of our preaching now, after the myſtery of redemption is brought to light, and hath its full evidence.

How then did the apoſtles preach *Chriſt?* It is endleſs to attempt a full detail of particulars; any part of the apoſtolical writings is authority ſufficient to our purpoſe; and therefore I have been ſparing in quotations all along, as needleſs to thoſe who will look into theſe writings with this view. And here we do not deſire to allege or inſiſt upon any

any paſſages in their writings, which may be ſuppoſed to be writ and inſerted for reaſons peculiar to that age and country in which the apoſtles wrote, and in which perhaps we are not ſo much obliged to imitate them in our preaching; for what will remain after all theſe are put out of the account, will, I am ſatisfied, be as full to our purpoſe, as theſe that are ſtruck off.

I will only then, by way of ſpecimen, ſelect ſome of the apoſtles diſcourſes on duties moſt moral, where we are apteſt to forget a mention of *Chriſt*, or reſpect to him, that it may at once appear the apoſtles ſhunned not the preſſing ſuch duties, or a regard to *Chriſt*, in the treating on them.

1 *Cor.* vi. 8. Honeſty is preſſed by theſe motives—the *unrighteous, thieves, and extortioners, ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God* (which in the ſtyle of the New Teſtament is *Chriſt*'s kingdom of grace and glory). ——That Chriſtians *are converted by the Spirit of Chriſt, and juſtified by his righteouſneſs.*

1 *Cor.* vi. 15. Chaſtity is enjoined, as *our bodies are members of Chriſt, as we are one ſpirit with him, temples of the Holy Ghoſt, and bought with a price.*

1 *Cor.* viii. and ix. Alms is recommended, as it will bring a large tribute of *praiſe to God for our ſubjection to the goſpel of Chriſt—and Chriſt became poor for our ſakes.*

Tit. iii. 2. Evil ſpeaking is forbidden, becauſe *we were fooliſh and wicked; but the grace of God has made the difference; not for our righteouſneſs, but of his free mercy he has regenerated us, and given us his holy Spirit, through Jeſus Chriſt, by whom we are juſtified, and made heirs of glory.*

Rom. xiii. Subjects are commanded to obey magiſtrates, *Becauſe the goſpel-day is come, and we ſhould put on Chriſt Jeſus.*

Eph. v. 25. Huſbands are charged to love their wives, *as Chriſt loved the church.*

Eph. v. 22. Wives obedience is urged, becauſe *the huſband is the head of the wife, as Chriſt is the head of the church.*

Tit. ii. 9. Servants are exhorted to their duty, *as they would adorn the doctrine of Chriſt——becauſe grace ſo teacheth, and that we look for Chriſt's appearance, who gave himſelf for us, that we might be holy.*

Now what is there in theſe motives peculiar to one age or nation? Are not all theſe as good now as formerly? And are men ſo ready in their duty, that we have no need of them?

Nay, it is worth obſervation, that the apoſtles do not confine themſelves to motives peculiarly adapted to the duty they are preſſing, and which ſerve to enforce one duty rather than another; but, as you may look back and ſee, when ſuch proper motives are not at hand, they take without any

ſcruple

ſcruple common or general ones, which will equally enforce any duty whatſoever.

And why ſhould not we introduce the peculiarities of the goſpel on all occaſions, as frequently as the apoſtles did? If our ſchemes of theology will not allow us, we have reaſon to ſuſpect we are in a different ſcheme from the apoſtles. Are we afraid men will make perverſe uſe of ſuch doctrines as the apoſtles uſed for motives? The apoſtles choſe to venture it, and why ſhould not we? If we will not dare to preach ſuch a goſpel as may be perverted by men of corrupt minds to their own injury, we muſt not expect to be the inſtruments of any good: If we will be *the ſavour of life* to ſome, we muſt expect to be *the ſavour of death* to others, or not preach at all.

I confeſs even the *Remonſtrant* ſcheme (which, I think, conſiderably ſinks the doctrines of grace) does allow room to regard *Chriſt* abundantly more than moſt preachers of that ſet do: I would meet them on their own principles: What hinders their frequently inculcating the merits of *Chriſt*, the depravity of our natures, the neceſſity of regeneration, the aids of grace, and union and communion with *Chriſt?* Theſe topicks, it were to be hoped, might have their effect: But alas! how few of the *Remonſtrants* improve to advantage ſo much of the goſpel as they hold and receive: And

it makes me leſs inclined to this ſcheme, that it ſo generally draws thoſe that embrace it into a ſtrain of preaching, even on practical ſubjects, ſo different from that of the apoſtles; and inclines them, I know not how, to ſuppreſs thoſe glorious motives (which yet their own principles might allow) by which the apoſtles enforced goſpel-duties.

(IV.) So only we ſhall deſerve the name of preachers of *Chriſt*——Only did I ſay? I am afraid this may ſound too harſh—— Come let us put the matter as ſoft and candid as common ſenſe will allow us——So ſhall we moſt evidently or beſt deſerve this honourable title.

Whilſt a preacher keeps off from the peculiarities of the goſpel, and ſays nothing but what the light of nature would alſo ſuggeſt and authorize, give me leave to ſay, a ſtranger might poſſibly doubt whether he is a Deiſt or a Chriſtian; the queſtion is like an imperfect mathematical problem, which equally admits of different ſolutions.

Suppoſe the ghoſts of *Paul* and *Seneca* to come, mere ſtrangers, into an aſſembly where one was haranguing the people in this abſtracted manner; I am apt to think *Seneca* would claim him as a philoſopher of his own ſect and religion. Now if *Paul* ſhould alſo make his claim to him as a miniſter

of

of *Chriſt*, how could the queſtion be decided without allowing *Seneca* to be a preacher of *Chriſt* alſo.

On the other hand, if a preacher picks out ſome of the truths of the *goſpel* of *Chriſt*, and even the peculiar and glorious truths of Chriſtianity, but ſo unhappily manages them, as not to lead people to holineſs, and the imitation of *Chriſt* thereby, what is this to the purpoſe of preaching, to the deſign of *Chriſt* and the goſpel? Such are quite off that ſcheme which is calculated *to deſtroy the works of the devil, and to teach men ſobriety, righteouſneſs, and godlineſs:* It is not only *Chriſt without us* we are to preach, but *Chriſt in us*, and our *putting on Chriſt Jeſus* by a holy heart and life.

If the apoſtle *James* ſhould come again, and make a viſitation to our churches, and hear ſuch a preacher, he would imagine he was got among ſuch people as he writes againſt in his Epiſtle; he would be apt, when the miniſter had done, in his zeal for *Chriſt*, to take the text in hand again, and ſupply what the preacher had omitted, *viz.* the application; and to ſay to the auditors, *Know ye not that faith without works is dead?* If the preacher ſhould here interrupt him, ſaying, 'Hold, ſpare thy pains, the 'Spirit of *God* will make the application, 'and teach men holineſs;'—would not *James* reply, 'I and the reſt of the apoſtles

'were taught to preach otherwiſe, and to 'give particular exhortations to duty; we 'judged we might as well leave it to the 'Spirit, without our pains, to reveal the 'doctrine, as to inſtruct men in the prac-'tice of the goſpel.'

Upon the whole, brethren, let it be our reſolution to ſtudy and preach *Chriſt Jeſus*: On this ſubject, there is room for the ſtrict-eſt reaſoning and moſt ſublime philoſophy; it deſerves, invites, and inſpires the ſtrongeſt fire of the orator; in extolling *Chriſt*, we cannot ſhock the moſt delicate taſte by over-ſtrained hyperboles; here the climax may riſe till it is out of ſight; our imagery can-not be too ſtrong and rich; and what more moves than an apoſtrophe to *Chriſt?* Or what proſopopœias more commanding than thoſe in which he is introduced?

Should our Lord himſelf appear and give you a charge at your entrance on the mi-niſtry, would he not ſay (what indeed he has ſaid already):

'*As the Father hath ſent me, ſo ſend I you* '*to preach the kingdom of God; that every* '*knee may bow to me, and every tongue con-*'*feſs me:—teach them to obſerve all things* '*whatſoever I have commanded you; and tell* '*them, that without me, they can do nothing;* '*that when they have done all, they are un-*'*profitable ſervants, and muſt be found in my* '*righteouſneſs:—become all things to all men;*

'*ſeek*

'*ſeek words which the Holy Ghoſt teacheth;*
'*that you may gain ſouls, and bring in my*
'*ſheep for whom I laid down my life;—if you*
'*love me, feed my ſheep:——I have called*
'*you friends; do all in my name, and to my*
'*honour; ſo I will be with you always; and*
'*if you thus watch for ſouls, you ſhall give up*
'*your account with joy at my appearing.——*
'*This is the preaching, which though it ſeem*
'*fooliſh to many, ſhall prove the power of God*
'*and wiſdom of God: caſt forth the net on*
'*this ſide, and ſo you may expect to catch many*
'*ſouls: be followers of my apoſtles as they*
'*are of me, and in my name ſhall ye do won-*
'*ders: if you preach me, I and nine ſhall*
'*therein rejoice: be not aſhamed of my goſpel,*
'*and I will not be aſhamed of you.*'

But to arrive at any tolerable perfection in preaching *Chriſt*, is a work of time, the reſult of a careful peruſal of the ſcriptures, and ſtudying the hearts of men; It requires the mortifying of the pride of carnal reaſon, a great concern for ſouls, and humble dependence on the Spirit of God, with the lively exerciſe of devotion in our cloſets.

As for the reaſoning part on the more agreed points of our religion, a young preacher ſooner may get to conſiderable excellence: but the Chriſtian orator is longer in finiſhing: We may ſooner get neceſſary truths into our own minds, and come at

minds

minds of our own ſize and taſte; but by proper motives and ways to reach ſouls of different make and turn, even the loweſt of the vulgar, is what very few quickly *arrive at:* But let us not deſpair; if we thus regard *Chriſt* in our miniſtrations, we may very reaſonably expect the aſſiſtance of his Spirit, and we ſhall be *able to do all this through Chriſt ſtrengthening us.*

DISCOURSE

DISCOURSE II.

Of particular and experimental PREACHING.

ADDRESSED TO

YOUNGER MINISTERS.

Gentlemen,

RIGHTLY to divide the word of truth is the neceſſary care of a miniſter, if he would *be approved of God, and be a workman that needeth not to be aſhamed,* 2 Tim. ii. 15. And it is a ſkill worth ſtudying for, and labouring to attain: Our ſucceſs, and the good of ſouls, depends upon it more than is commonly imagined.

No queſtion you may have heard many honeſt people expreſs their diſſatisfaction with many preachers, in ſuch terms as theſe; '*They go on conſtantly in a general way that* '*does not come cloſe to the heart, reaches not* '*my*

'*my caſe and experience, and I cannot edify* '*by them.*——Their complaint is not altogether without meaning or reaſon, as I hope you will be convinced by and by.

To keep a little in view that paſſage of ſcripture I have mentioned, the *dividing the word* may mean theſe four things.

I. *Going through the variety of goſpel-ſubjects:* Declaring the whole counſel of God, the doctrines of grace, threatenings, promiſes, and duties of morality; and giving each its due proportion.

Some finding their thoughts flow moſt readily and affectionately on the doctrines of grace, and that by theſe they beſt command the affections of the hearers, are altogether upon them; and neglect to *teach the people to obſerve what Chriſt has commanded them.* I bear many of them witneſs they have a *zeal for God*, but I wiſh it were more *according to knowledge:* They do not ſure ſufficiently conſider that holineſs is the deſign of Chriſtianity; and our preaching on other heads, is in order the better to enforce duty, and make men like to *Chriſt.*

I am afraid, from what I have obſerved, that this ſtrain of preaching will increaſe the number of ſuch hearers, whom our Saviour deſcribes by the ſtony ground in the parable of the ſower, namely, ſuch who are all notion and affection, with a forward profeſſion;

profeſſion; but have an unſubdued will, no root in themſelves, and bring forth no fruit to God. This ſtrain, I fear, though it brings many toward *Chriſt*, will bring but few ſafely to him: Many of their hearers, with *Chriſt* much in their mouths, will prove but hypocrites ſettled on their lees, and ſlaves to luſt. Nor is this ſtrain more happy for the uniform growth of the ſincere Chriſtian: They that ſit under it, are too frequently low, imperfect, and partial in practical godlineſs; diſtempered with conceit and prepoſterous zeal for words and phraſes, and things of little or no conſequence; perplexed and perplexing others with a thouſand groundleſs ſcruples; *children in underſtanding*, and it were happy were they ſo in malice too; but alas! their narrowneſs of mind infects the heart with uncharitable affections to Chriſtians of different perſuaſions.

Others having not arrived at the reliſh of the doctrines of grace themſelves, ſuppreſs them in their preaching, and are altogether on morality; enforcing it with no motives of the goſpel, except ſome of thoſe addreſſed to fear.——Theſe, if they are maſters of much fire, may convince ſome; but it fares with moſt of their convicts, as with the man in the parable, out of whom the unclean ſpirit went for a while; but finding his houſe empty, returned with ſeven more;

more; and the latter end of such is worse than the beginning.—Or else, the awakened hearer takes up with a proud dependence upon a mistaken, external, and Pharisaical righteousness.—Or else, the convinced sinner, not being by his teacher led to *Christ*, proceeds not, settles not, but abiding long under the doubtful concern, is wearied with it, weary of it, and comes to nothing; which seems to be the thought in *Hos.* xiii. 13. *Ephraim is an unwise son; he should not stay long in the place of the breaking forth of children.*—Or lastly, if any are converted under his ministry, it is very usual that they are forced to desert it, to find richer and sweeter pasture for their souls.

Some of their hearers may possibly prefer this strain of preaching; but it does not thence follow they are the better for it: And here I will recite a paragraph out of *Remarkable Passages in the Life of a private Gentleman.* '*Spiritual searching discourses I did not* '*so much savour as mere moral doctrines;* '*though God knows too immoral myself.*——— '*The hopes I had conceived of the strength of* '*my good resolutions rendered them grateful*— 'Seneca's Morals *I read with great plea-* 'sure———*Mr.* Baxter's Saints Rest *frighted* '*me; so in reading a few pages, I threw it by.*'

But with regret he tells us what little profit he had in that way, of his fondness of which he was ashamed, when he came to

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be of *Paul's* mind, *to count all dross and dung that he might gain Christ.*

II. *The putting of a thought in several distinct views and lights for different purposes and designs.* The sacred writers are herein our pattern, and that not by chance, but for wise reasons. One view is designed to raise one affection; another view, to excite another of a different sort: And farther, one of the views is designed as an antidote against the poison, which the corruption of mens hearts might draw out of the other.

For instance, the terms and way of our justification and salvation are frequently stated thus——

That we must be found in Christ, having on the righteousness which is of God by faith, Phil. iii. 9. and *we must be made the righteousness of God in him,* 2 Cor. v. 21.

And this view is exquisitely adapted to humble us, to draw forth love and gratitude, and encourage our hopes and dependence.

But lest this phraseology alone made use of, should beget security, at other times we are told——

That *by works a man is justified, and not by faith only; and that faith without works is dead,* James ii. 24. 26. and that the inquiry at the last day shall be, who has *fed the hungry, clothed the naked?* &c. Matth. xxv.

And moſt commonly theſe two views are united in the ſame paragraph; that one may prevent the ill conſequences man's perverſeneſs would draw from the other: As phyſicians finding ſome dangerous effect likely to follow from a drug of ſovereign virtue, mix ſome other with it to prevent the fatal conſequences.

So we are ſaid to be *elect according to the foreknowledge of God, through ſanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and ſprinkling of the blood of Jeſus*, 1 Peter i. 2.

Again we are told, that *by grace we are ſaved through faith, the gift of God, not of works; for we are his workmanſhip, created in Chriſt unto good works*, Eph. ii. 8, 9, 10.

I may give another inſtance, in the different ways the ſcripture ſpeaks of power and duty.

Sometimes we are told, that *we cannot come to Chriſt except the Father draw us*, John vi. 44. That *without Chriſt we can do nothing*, John xv. 5. That *if we live, it is not we, but Chriſt that liveth in us*, Gal. ii. 20.

Now theſe views tend to hide pride from man, to create a diffidence of ourſelves, and to centre our hopes and dependence in *Chriſt*.

But leſt the ſlothful and wicked ſervant ſhould make his impotence his excuſe; we are called upon to *turn and make us new hearts*, exhorted to *aſk and we ſhall receive*,

ceive, and are assured *God will give the Spirit to them that ask him*, Luke xi. 9. 13.

And how happily are these two views united in *Phil.* ii. 12, 13. *Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you to will and to do.*

Now, less skilful dividers of the word deal entirely in one of these views only, and neglect the other; and whilst they are labouring to excite one good affection, they raise another of a bad tendency together with it: To this in part is owing that there are so many low or distempered Christians. Nor is this partiality more happy at effecting the real conversion of sinners, who generally under such management are either left asleep, and settled in a fond conceit of their own righteousness; or else *stumble at the rock of offence* (in a different manner indeed from what the *Jews* did), thinking to find by *Christ* a way to heaven, without holiness or moral honesty.

III. *Distinctly explaining and enforcing particular duties, and opposing particular sins.* It is true, the whole scheme of gospel-duty is deducible from the general heads of faith and love; but alas! most mens minds are slow, confused and erroneous in long deductions, and it is our business to lead them on in every step, and to shew what particular duties to God, our neighbour, and our-

ſelves, will flow from theſe principles, and are neceſſary to make the man of God perfect. We muſt particularly teach them to *add to their faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godlineſs, brotherly-kindneſs, and charity*, if we would not leave them *blind and unfruitful*, 2 Peter i. 7. And we ſhould in a particular manner ſpeak of *the fruits of the Spirit, as love, joy, peace, long-ſuffering, gentleneſs, goodneſs, faith, meekneſs, and temperance;* and at proper ſeaſons explain and enforce each of them, *Gal.* v. 22, 23. We ſhould apply the lamp of the word to detect and diſgrace all the particular *works of darkneſs*, and to make manifeſt *the fruits of the fleſh; ſuch as adultery, laſciviouſneſs, wrath, ſtrife, ſeditions, hereſies, envyings, murders, drunkenneſs, revellings, and ſuch like*, Gal. v. 19, 20, 21.

If I ſhould read to a ſick perſon a learned lecture of the benefit of health, and exhort him to take care to recover it; but never inquire into the nature of his diſeaſe, or preſcribe proper methods and medicines for the cure; he would hardly acquieſce in me for his phyſician, or reſign the care of his bodily health to me.

Nor is it a more likely way to the ſoul's health to reſt in general exhortations to holineſs only, without diſtinctly handling the ſeveral branches thereof, and ſins oppoſite thereunto.

IV. *Parti-*

IV. *Particularly applying to the ſeveral caſes, tempers, and experiences of the hearers.* Beſides many thoughts ſuited in general to all caſes, there might properly ariſe in the application of moſt ſubjects, thoughts diſtinctly proper to the converted and unconverted, to notional hypocrites and mere moraliſts, to mourners, to back-ſliders, and lazy Chriſtians, and at ſeveral times to a much greater variety of characters and perſons.

Now ſuch particular addreſſes, when the caſe is lively drawn, in the natural language of the ſort of men intended, and judiciouſly and artfully ſpoken to, are the cloſeſt, moſt weighty, and moſt uſeful parts of the application.

That *this* is the true way of addreſſing an auditory, *viz.* to divide them into ſeveral claſſes, and diſtinctly ſpeak to each, will be plain, if we look through the apoſtolical writings, and I might add the prophetical alſo, with this view; and we ſhall find that both prophets and apoſtles frequently take care to diſtinguiſh *the holy and the vile*, the converted and the unconverted. As for inſtance, as to their knowledge and apprehenſions of things. 1 *Cor.* ii. 14, 15. *The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit—they are fooliſhneſs to him—he cannot know them: But the ſpiritual judge all things.* And alſo as to their obedience to the law. Rom. viii. 7, 8. *The carnal mind is enmity*

againſt God—is not ſubject to God's law, nor can be ſubject, or pleaſe God.

They particularly rebuke ſcoffers, and confute gainſayers—*behold ye deſpiſers, and wonder, and periſh*—as for inſtance, thoſe who denied or cavilled at the reſurrection, 1 *Cor.* xv. *Thou fool, that which thou ſoweſt, is not quickened except it die*, &c. and alſo, thoſe that were for a faith without works, *James* ii. *Wilt thou know, vain man, that faith without works is dead?* &c.

They addreſs to carnal ſtupid ſinners in an awful way; denounce *wo to them that are at eaſe:* As *Paul* when he made *Felix* tremble, *Acts* xxiv. 25. or as *Stephen*, Acts vii. 51—54. *Ye ſtiff-necked, and uncircumciſed*, &c.

They lead convinced ſinners to *Chriſt*; to thoſe that are inquiring they ſay, *If ye will inquire, inquire ye, return, come, turn to the ſtrong hold; if the Lord hath torn, he will heal:* As in *Acts* ii. 38. *Repent and be baptized in the name of the Lord Jeſus for the remiſſion of ſins*, &c. Acts xvi. 31. *Believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, &c.

They reaſon with the moraliſt, and thoſe that *truſt in themſelves that they are righteous; ſhewing their righteouſneſs is as filthy rags.* Rom. iii. *The law ſaith, there is none righteous, but all the world are guilty before God; Therefore by the deeds of the law ſhall no fleſh be juſtified; but the righteouſneſs of God is manifeſted, that God might freely juſtify*

tify them that believe on Jeſus: therefore man is juſtified by faith; boaſting is excluded by the law of faith. And *Gal.* iii. *Ye received the Spirit by the hearing of faith—the goſpel was before preached to* Abraham—*they that are of the works of the law, are under the curſe. But the law could not diſannul the covenant confirmed before, but was a ſchoolmaſter to bring us to Chriſt, that we might be juſtified by faith; they then that are Chriſt's, are* Abraham's *ſeed, and heirs according to the promiſe.*

They ſharply rebuke and expoſe pretending hypocrites, ſhewing them their abominations, detecting and confounding the wretches that *delight to know God's ways, and hear his word, but will not do it:* As *Peter*, Acts viii. 21. *Thou haſt no part in this matter; thy heart is not right in the ſight of God;* and *James*, in chap. ii. *Shew me thy faith without thy works—the devils believe and tremble.*

They ſpirit up Chriſtians that have but a little ſtrength, and perſuade them to make farther advances in religion; that he that is *feeble may be as* David: As in *Heb.* v. at the end, and the beginning of chap. vi. *Ye are dull of hearing—for the time ye ought to have been teachers—ſtrong meat belongeth to them that are of full age—therefore leaving the firſt principles, let us go on to perfection.*

They deal with the ſeveral ſorts of diſtempered Chriſtians tenderly, and yet plainly

ly and faithfully; as particularly with thoſe who idolized one miniſter, and deſpiſed others; telling them, it is *not by might or power of man, but by God's Spirit*, that the goſpel is ſucceſsful: As in 1 *Cor.* iii. *While one ſaith, I am of* Paul, *and another, I am of* Apollos, *are ye not carnal? Who is* Paul *or* Apollos, *but miniſters by whom ye believed? It is God that giveth the increaſe*—Paul, Apollos, Cephas, *all are yours*——They endeavour to ſoften thoſe of too rigid a temper, exhorting them not *to ſpeak to the grief of thoſe whom God hath ſmitten:* As in 2 Cor. ii. 7. *Ye ought rather to forgive and comfort him: I beſeech you confirm your love towards him.* Gal. vi. 1. *If a man be overtaken in a fault, reſtore him in the ſpirit of meekneſs, conſidering leſt thou alſo be tempted*——They talk roundly to thoſe, who are apt to make God the author of ſin; who ſay *we unavoidably pine away in our iniquities, and how can we then be ſaved?* As in *James* i. 13, &c. *Let no man ſay, I am tempted of God; for God tempteth not any man.*

Declining Chriſtians are quickened, awakened, and put in mind of the *love of their eſpouſals:* As in Rev. iii. 2. *Be watchful, and ſtrengthen the things that remain that are ready to die.*

They awfully warn thoſe who are in danger of ſinning and falling back to perdition; telling them, *the righteouſneſs they have done*

will

will be remembered no more, and God's ſoul will have no pleaſure in them: As in *Heb.* vi. 4. *&c. It is impoſſible for thoſe who were once enlightened,* &c. *if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, ſeeing they crucify the Son of God afreſh.*

They encourage the perſecuted and afflicted; telling them, *when they paſs through fire and water, God will be with them,* and that *when they are tried they ſhall come forth as gold, and be the Lord's in the day that he maketh up his jewels:* As in *Rom.* viii. 18. *The ſufferings of this preſent time, are not worthy to be compared with the glory that ſhall be revealed.* And *Heb.* xii. *We are compaſſed with a cloud of witneſſes—Jeſus endured the croſs, and is ſet down at the right hand of the Majeſty on high—Whom the Lord loveth, he chaſteneth, and that for our profit—Chaſtening yields the peaceable fruits of righteouſneſs.* And more particularly, thoſe that lament relations dead in *Chriſt,* are told, they ſhall go to be happy with them, though the dead ſhall not return: As in 1 *Theſſ.* iv. 13, 14. *Sorrow not as others that have no hope; for them which ſleep in Jeſus will God bring with him.*

There are alſo particular leſſons for ſtrong Chriſtians; *viz.* to be tender to the weak, and to be public-ſpirited, that as *Ephraim ſhould not envy Judah, ſo neither ſhould Judah vex Ephraim:* Rom. xvi. *Him that*

that is weak in the faith receive——Let not him that eateth, deſpiſe him that eateth not——Let none put a ſtumbling-block in his brother's way——Let not your good be ill ſpoken of——Haſt thou faith, have it to thyſelf——Bear the infirmities of the weak——Let every one pleaſe his neighbour for his good to edification. And in 1 *Cor.* viii. *Knowledge puffeth up; but charity edifieth——Let not your liberty be a ſtumbling-block to the weak——nor through thy knowledge let thy weak brother periſh, for whom Chriſt died——If fleſh make my brother to offend, I will eat no meat while the world ſtands.* Again they are told, that *a mark is ſet upon the men* that deplore the ſins of the times; and *a book of remembrance is written* for thoſe who diſtinguiſh themſelves by their piety in times of abounding wickedneſs: As in *Rev.* iii. 4. *Thou haſt a few names who have not defiled their garments; and ſhall walk with me in white, for they are worthy.*

You find alſo a ſuitable portion for thoſe who are groaning under corruption; who complain they were *ſhapen in iniquity*, and their actual *errors are paſt underſtanding*: In *Rom.* vii. Although *I am carnal, ſold under ſin, and what I would I do not, and what I hate, that do I; in my fleſh dwells no good, and to perform good I find not, yea with the fleſh I ſerve the law of ſin (oh wretched man that I am!)* yet *I conſent to God's law,*

law, and delight in it after the inner-man; it is not then I that do this evil, but ſin that dwelleth in me——I thank God through Chriſt, with my mind I ſerve God's law, and God will deliver me from the body of this death. And they are told how God has *laid on Chriſt our iniquities*, and he will be *the Lord our righteouſneſs and ſtrength:* 1 John ii. 1. *If any man ſin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the righteous.*

The humble and penitent, who are of a *contrite ſpirit, and tremble at God's word*, are comforted: 2 *Cor.* vii. *Ye were ſorry indeed, it was but for a ſeaſon——It was after a godly manner——I rejoice in it——Such ſorrow worketh repentance not to be repented of——It wrought in you carefulneſs, fear, deſire, zeal, and revenge; you have approved yourſelves clear in this matter.*

They who want direction, and cry out, *Oh that my ways were directed to keep thy ſtatutes!* are ſent to God for counſel: *James* i. 5. *If any lack wiſdom, let him aſk it of God, and it ſhall be given him.*

The *deceiver and the deceived* (*viz.* thoſe of evil minds, who ſeduce others, and thoſe that are miſled in the ſimplicity of their hearts) are to be diſtinctly and differently treated: *Jude* 22. *On ſome have compaſſion, and others ſave with fear.*

As

As for thoſe of the houſe of *Iſrael* in deſertion, who *mourn after the Lord, who walk in darkneſs and ſee no light*, and *ſay the Lord hath forſaken me*, there were, I believe, few, if any, in thoſe days of the plentiful effuſion of the Spirit, when the goſpel-church was in its infancy, and *a nation was to be born in a day*; but few, I ſay, who had doubts about their ſincerity: they had perſecutions, diſtreſs, and exerciſes of another ſort; and thoſe were ſufficient. I am apt to think ſuch caſes were alſo rare in the beginning of the Reformation from *Popery*: which ſeems to be the occaſion of ſome of the firſt reformers confounding faith with aſſurance. However, there are laid up, in the New Teſtament, ſome proper hints of counſel, for ſuch as ſhould in after-times labour under the hidings of God's face; as, to *examine themſelves*——*For this to beſeech the Lord*——*To clear themſelves of* ſin——*Not to faint in well-doing*; and the like.

Brethren, from your acquaintance with the ſcriptures, you will eaſily perceive that I could as happily run this ſpecimen much farther through the ſacred writings. And if you peruſe the writings of the moſt powerful and ſucceſsful preachers, particularly the *Puritan* divines, you will ſee that they herein imitated the great leaders of the Chriſtian profeſſion; and were large in their particular

ticular application to ſeveral ſorts of perſons; ſuiting their diſcourſes to all the variety of the hearts of men, and ſorts and frames of Chriſtians, according to the true precepts of oratory and Chriſtianity. In this way they found their own hearts warmed, and thus they reached the hearts of their hearers; whilſt many were imagining the miniſter had been told of their caſe, and made the ſermon for them: and ſo was verified that paſſage in *Heb.* iv. 12. *The word of God is quick and powerful—— a diſcerner of thoughts and intents of the heart.*

Now what ſucceſs can we reaſonably expect, if we do not take into cloſe conſideration the caſe of our ſeveral ſpiritual patients?

If a man profeſſing *phyſic* ſhould adminiſter or give out one conſtant medicine for fevers, and another for conſumptions, and ſo for other diſtempers, without conſidering the age, conſtitution, ſtrength, and way of living of his patient; and not vary his method and medicines as thoſe varied: we ſhould hardly call this the regular practice of *phyſic*: nor can I think this general and undiſtinguiſhing way will be more ſafe, or likely to anſwer its end, in *divinity* than in *medicine*.

Now I reſt perſuaded, brethren, the thing is ſo evident you cannot but allow, it

is the beſt to ſuit ourſelves to all the variety of tempers and experience of the hearers, if it can be done; and I hope I may ſucceſsfully offer ſome thoughts upon the way how this ſkill may be attained.

Above all then, carefully ſtudy your own hearts, and preach over the ruder ſketches of your ſermons to yourſelves firſt; by which means the correſponding workings of your own hearts and affections may furniſh you with proper thoughts wherewith to apply cloſely to all, whoſe temper, and experience, and caſe is like your own: for what is ſupplied to your imperfect notes, out of the applicatory meditations of your own minds on the ſubject, will very probably, according to the uſual way of the Spirit, happily and powerfully reach thoſe of the ſame make in like circumſtances.

But alas! one man's experience falls far ſhort of all the variety of mens hearts, and of the Spirit's work; nay, thoſe whoſe heads are turned for cloſe and regular thought, and whoſe time has been ſpent in ſtudy and letters, as they go on more rationally and evenly in religion, have leſs variety of experience, than many of a different mould and way of thinking. Here it will be needful then to look out of ourſelves, and take a larger view, in order to be acquainted with caſes and tempers different from our own; and with ſuch methods

thods of the Spirit's work, as we ourſelves have never experienced, but many others have. Now the beſt and original way of getting this acquaintance with men, and with God's workings in them (and I may add of Satan's workings alſo), is by converſing freely with the ſerious people of our flock.

I know your thoughts will prevent me with an objection: You will ſay, this is almoſt impracticable, eſpecially amongſt perſons of politeneſs and figure; theſe alas! too rarely will uſe any ſuch freedom with us, in laying open their hearts, and communicating their experiences to us, as to give us the needful information.——If we ever do arrive at any acquaintance with the experience of Chriſtians, it is little thanks to ſuch as theſe; they expect we ſhould preach ſuitably to them, and that with as much reaſon as *Nebuchadnezzar* demanded of the wiſe men to interpret a dream they knew not. The middle and lower ſort of people indeed, are more unreſerved to grave miniſters of age and ſtanding; but will hardly uſe the ſame freedom with young men.

To help you over this difficulty, I would obſerve; that as for *the polite*, and *men of ſome thought and reading*, your own experience, with the allowances and corrections a moderate ſkill in human nature will en-

able you to make, may lead you into happy conjectures at their way of thinking: Besides, in the time of their visitation, under some sore affliction, you shall find them more communicative; and an hour's free discourse, with such as can give a rational and intelligible account of themselves, in a season when they are disposed to do it, is as valuable and useful, as it is rare and difficult to enter into.

Again, have an eye upon *the serious youth*, whom nature and providence has designed to place in a superior class; and especially at a time when the impressions of religion are new to them. You shall find them more open than elder persons, if you court their intimacy, and relieve their bashfulness: And if you can see into the heart of a youth, then with the proper allowances for the alterations that age and business will make, you may pretty well guess at their turn of mind in more advanced years.

With the generality of *serious and more advanced Christians*, there needs not so much nicety, to get into such a spiritual intimacy with them as we desire; the laying aside nicety and ceremony, and getting into such a grave good-natured way as our character requires, is more than half-way to our purpose: Where this is insufficient to encourage the people to freedom, lead them into it by communicating first, either what yourselves have

have experienced, under the name of a third person (if modesty or prudence require), or else what you have learned from others, without betraying the confidence they have put in you: By these methods we shall seldom fail of drawing serious people on to such a freedom, as will be of use to them and ourselves.——If we heartily go about it, we are pretty sure to succeed.

I may farther hint at a compendious way for the gaining much knowledge of mens hearts in a little time, *viz.* If you have any tolerable skill in the different tempers and complexions of mankind, distribute in your thoughts your people into classes, according to their natural genius and temper, and select one of each class to be more particularly acquainted with; for amongst those whom nature has formed alike, you shall find upon farther inquiry, a strange uniformity in the Spirit's work and way of proceeding with them.

I might recommend a way of knowing these things at second hand, *viz.* from the most popular and experimental authors; but this way is far inferior to the other; and we shall but faintly paint any phænomenon of the heart, by copying another picture; it is infinitely preferable to do it from the life. Yet would I earnestly recommend the perusal of such authors, as deal much in an experimental strain, and have

been very ſucceſsful in it; but with a different deſign, *viz.* That we may learn from them, how to deſcribe, in a diſcreet and lively manner, ſuch caſes as we ourſelves have obſerved; and how to addreſs properly to thoſe caſes, with the like thoughts and expreſſions, as have in the courſe of their preaching happily anſwered the end.

After all, rightly to divide the word of truth with wiſdom, is a matter of no ſmall difficulty; but if we carefully and diligently go about it, with a zeal for our Maſter's intereſt, and ſenſible of our own inſufficience, *aſking wiſdom of God*, we know *he giveth liberally*, and will ſurely make us *wiſe to win ſouls*, to the honour of his name, and our own *rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jeſus*; to whom with the Father and Holy Spirit, that one God whom we adore, be paid the higheſt honours and praiſes to eternal ages. *Amen.*

A LET-

A LETTER, TO A FRIEND

Concerning the most useful WAY of

PREACHING,

Written in *German* by the late Reverend and Celebrated

Dr. *AUGUSTUS HERMANNUS FRANCK*,

Professor of Divinity in the University of *Hall* in *Saxony*, Pastor of a Church, and Director of the charitable FOUNDATIONS there.

Translated into *Latin* by Order of his Son, the present Professor FRANCK, and out of the *Latin* into *English* by DAVID JENNINGS, D. D.

PREFACE.

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PREFACE.

THE good acceptance which the two preceding Diſcourſes met with, when they were firſt publiſhed by the Author (a little before his death), and the ſpeedy demand of a ſecond edition, together with the frequent inquiries which have been made for them ſince they have been out of print, encourages this republication of them. Were it proper for me to add any thing to that recommendation which is prefixed to them, I might mention the acceptance which they have alſo met with in foreign parts: For, beſides a large edition printed in *Scotland*, they have lately been tranſlated and publiſhed in the *German* language, by order of the Reverend Dr. FRANCK, the preſent worthy Profeſſor of Divinity in the Univerſity of *Hall* in *Saxony*. The Reverend Dr. WATTS, who correſponds with that Profeſſor, ſent him theſe Diſcourſes the laſt year; with

with which he was ſo well pleaſed, as not only to give them a very high encomium in his next letter to the Doctor, but to get them tranſlated into *High-Dutch*, and inſerted in a collection of papers, which is publiſhed in that country about once a-month, for the advancement of religion. In return for this preſent, which proved ſo very acceptable to the good Profeſſor, he ſoon after ſent the Doctor a *Latin* tranſlation of a Letter, which his excellent father, and predeceſſor in the divinity-chair at *Hall*, had publiſhed in the *German* language, pretty much on the ſame ſubject; which the Doctor has been ſo kind as to communicate to me, and which I have tranſlated into *Engliſh*, and here added to theſe Diſcourſes of my brother's; in hopes that, by the bleſſing of God, it may be a conſiderable means of furthering the good deſign of them, *viz.* to form ſkilful labourers for the Lord's vineyard, and to revive that too much neglected ſtrain and way of preaching, which large experience has abundantly proved to be moſt uſeful and ſucceſsful.

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The two preceding Diſcourſes were originally prepared for academical lectures, and were delivered by the Author to a ſet of pupils, who were training up under his inſtruction for the ſervice of the ſanctuary. In the Letter, which is now added, we have the ſentiments of one of the moſt celebrated preachers and divines, and perhaps one of the moſt truly apoſtolic men, that ſome paſt ages have known, on the ſame ſubject: A man whom God did very uncommonly own, not only as a preacher and a tutor, but above all in that almoſt miraculous work (if I need ſay *almoſt*) his building and eſtabliſhing the Orphan-houſe at *Glaucha* in the ſuburbs of *Hall*; a work which both in the beginning and progreſs of it can be attributed to no means ſo properly as to the power of faith. An hiſtorical account of that affair, wrote by the Profeſſor himſelf, as it was laid before *Frederick I.* King of *Pruſſia*, to whoſe dominions *Hall* belonged, and who in the year 1700 gave a commiſſion to four of his privy counſellors to examine ſtrictly into it, was afterwards publiſhed, under the title of

Pietas

Pietas Hallenſis, and has ſince been tranſlated into *Engliſh*. I ſuppoſe it will not be unacceptable, to ſuch perſons eſpecially as have not read that larger account, to give a brief abſtract of it in this place.

When the Profeſſor was firſt ſettled as a Miniſter at *Glaucha*, he, according to the cuſtom of charitably diſpoſed perſons in thoſe parts, appointed one day in every week for the poor to come to his door for alms. Their miſeries, but eſpecially their groſs ignorance and wickedneſs, which generally prevails among that ſort of people, very ſenſibly touched him; and above all to ſee numbers of children among them growing up in that diſſolute way of life, was to him a very affecting and pitiful ſight. This made him reſolve on ſome attempt for their ſpiritual as well as their bodily relief. Accordingly every *Thurſday*, which was his day for diſtributing alms, he took all the poor that came into his houſe, and there, beſides giving them money, he inſtructed the children, in the preſence of the elder perſons, in the prin-

ciples

ciples of religion, and concluded with prayer. This exercise was set up in the beginning of the year 1694. The number of the poor who came to this exercise (many of them probably for the sake of the alms) soon increasing, and consequently the charge that attended it increasing too, obliged the Professor to seek for some assistance in carrying on this good work. For that purpose therefore he set up an alms-box in his parlour, with these words written over it, 1 *John* iii. 17. *Whoso hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?* and under it, 2 Cor. ix. 7. *Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give, not grudgingly, or of necessity, for God loveth a cheerful giver.* This was intended as a tacit admonition to all that came in, to open their hearts towards the poor. About a quarter of a year after this box was set up, a certain person put into it at one time, to the value of *eighteen shillings and six-pence, English.* When the Professor took this sum into

his hands, he ſaid, in full aſſurance of faith, "This is now a conſiderable fund, "worthy to be laid out in ſome im- "portant undertaking; therefore I "will even take this for the founda- "tion of a Charity-ſchool." And im- mediately he laid out eight ſhillings of it in books, and hired a poor ſtudent to teach the children two hours in a day. When this ſtock was juſt ſpent, ſome friends who came to viſit the Profeſſor, and were much pleaſed with his chari- table eſſay, contributed more; upon which the two hours of teaching were enla- ed to five, and alms were diſtri- buted to the children three times a- week, to engage them to come more conſtantly to ſchool. But after matters had gone on in this way for ſome time, the Profeſſor but too plainly ſaw that all his endeavours upon thoſe poor va- grants were like to be fruſtrated, by their keeping ſuch bad company out of ſchool-time. Some of them ran away with their books, and returned to ſchool no more. This made him reſolve to chooſe out twelve of the moſt hopeful of the children, and to venture upon

their

their maintenance, as well as their education. At first he put them out to persons of known integrity and piety, to be educated by them. But as this little beginning came to be known abroad, several persons sent in contributions to carry on so good a design; particularly the Lord put it into the heart of a person of quality to give a *thousand crowns*, and two other persons contributed *four hundred*. Upon which a house was purchased, and converted into an Hospital for the poor orphans. This was in the year 1696. Afterwards alms were sent in by several other persons; many of them came from unknown hands. Accordingly more children were still admitted into the Hospital, till the house grew too strait for them; which put the Professor on a design of building a large and commodious Hospital; for he clearly foresaw, that the hiring of more houses, scattered up and down, would be attended with very great inconveniences. One gentleman had lately sent him *five hundred crowns*, with a desire that some part of that sum might be disposed of to poor students;

which the Professor looked upon as a call of providence, to make indigent scholars a part of his care. This enlarged his charitable design beyond his former intention. He now wanted a building that would hold at least two hundred persons; but his stock of money was by this time so far spent, that, as he writes, he had not enough to build a small cottage. No wonder then that several of his friends dissuaded him from so hazardous an undertaking! But the Lord strengthened his faith in so powerful a manner, and supported him with such a presence of mind, as carried him above all discouragement. Accordingly, *July* 13, 1698, the foundation of a spacious Hospital was laid, IN THE NAME OF GOD, without any settled fund, or so much as a promise from any great persons to contribute to the building of it. "And "now, the Professor writes, I was to "wait upon God, and from week to "week to receive at his hand what he "would graciously please to furnish "me with for carrying on the build-"ing." It must also be remembered,

that the weekly expence of maintaining the poor, which he had already under his care, was very considerable; but nothing could discourage the pious Professor, his faith kept pace with his growing charity, and he had a firm trust in providence for the fulfilling of those kind desires, which he was confidently persuaded God had put into his heart. Nor were his expectations in this matter at all disappointed; for the building was carried on successfully, and the poor supported all the time merely by seemingly accidental contributions, which were sent in from time to time by charitable persons, living not only in *Germany*, but in most other Protestant countries of *Europe*. So that in the year 1702 the Hospital was finished, which had cost *five thousand pounds*, and was peopled with above two hundred poor. The steps of providence in carrying on this affair, were indeed very extraordinary. God several times suffered the good Professor's faith to be tried by very pressing necessities; as when the workmen were to be paid, the poor to be maintained,

tained, and yet the stock of money was quite exhausted, and there was no rational prospect of any further supply.

This often happened; but his recourse was always to God by prayer, which constantly met with a gracious answer. I will here set down two or three passages of this sort, by way of instance, out of a great number that are recorded in the *Pietas Hallensis*:

Memorable instances of the power of faith and prayer.

"At one time, he writes, all provisions were gone, when the Steward "declared there was a necessity of buying some cattle to furnish the table, "and other necessaries. Under these "pressing circumstances I found one "comfort, which was a *presence of mind in prayer*, joined with a confident dependence upon the Lord, who heareth the very cry of the young ravens. "When prayer was over, I heard some body knock at the door, which when I opened there was an acquaintance of "mine holding in his hand a letter, "and a parcel of money wrapt up, "which he presented to me, and I

"found

"found therein *fifty crowns*, sent a great way for the relief of our poor.

"At another time, there was want again in every corner. The Steward brought his book, and desired me to defray the weekly charges. My recourse was to God through faith. The expences were necessary, and I saw not the least provision, nor any way to procure it. This made me resolve to retire into my closet, and to beg the Lord's assistance in so pressing a necessity; but as I was preparing for prayer, I received a letter from a merchant, intimating that he was ordered to pay a *thousand crowns* to me for the relief of the Hospital. This put me in mind of that saying, Isa. lxv. 24. *It shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.* Nevertheless I entered into my closet, but instead of begging and praying, as I had designed, I praised and extolled the name of the Lord.

"Another time, I stood in need of a great sum of money, insomuch that an *hundred crowns* would not have served

" ſerved turn, and yet I ſaw not the
" leaſt appearance how I might be ſup-
" plied with an hundred groats. The
" Steward came and ſet forth the want
" we were in, I bid him to come again
" after dinner, and I reſolved to put up
" my prayers to the Lord for his aſſiſt-
" ance. When he came again after
" dinner, I was ſtill in the ſame want,
" and ſo appointed him to come again
" in the evening. In the mean time
" a friend of mine came to ſee me, and
" with him I joined in prayers, and
" found myſelf much moved to praiſe
" and magnify the Lord for all his
" admirable dealings towards mankind,
" even from the beginning of the world;
" and the moſt remarkable inſtances
" came readily to my remembrance
" whilſt I was praying. I was ſo ele-
" vated in praiſing and magnifying
" God, that I inſiſted only on that
" exercife of my preſent devotion,
" and found no inclination to put up
" many anxious petitions to be deliver-
" ed out of the preſent neceſſity. At
" length my friend taking his leave, I
" accompanied him to the door, where

"I found the Steward waiting on one "side for the money he wanted, and "on the other, a person who brought "an *hundred and fifty crowns* for the "support of the Hospital."

Thus was this famous Hospital, which has since been one of the most illustrious ornaments and supports of the Protestant interest in *Germany*, built without any other fund but that of faith. Surely, we must say, *This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.* Whether it may pass for a miracle or no, yet thus much I take for certain, that if any Popish monastery had ever been founded in the same manner, and such remarkable steps of providence had attended the building of it, as did actually attend this Protestant Hospital at *Hall*, the world would have rung with the noise of the miracle, and it had indeed been a much better miracle than any which the Papists boast of. But to return to the story. The Hospital being thus finished, at least as far as was intended when the foundation was laid, it was still to depend immediately on providence for its future support and maintenance.

Nor

Nor for this did the Professor's faith fail, nor were his hopes disappointed; for the Author of the Preface to the *English* translation of Professor FRANCK's *Christus sacræ Scripturæ Nucleus*, informs us, that in the year 1706 the state of the Hospital was as follows:

Ten schools, in which 988 children were instructed by 72 masters. The number of persons lodged and subsisted in the Hospital was 360, and 84 poor students of the university had their diet there. Eight poor widows were maintained, with a chaplain and a maid-servant, and provision also was made for the relief of casual poor.

The death of this excellent Professor, which happened in the year 1727, in the 65th year of his age, filled many persons with fear, that this good work of charity, now it must be deprived of the support of his influence and prayers, would languish and die too; but in this their fears have been happily disappointed. It was honour enough for this holy man to be such an illustrious instance of faith, and to be the instrument of so great and good a work:

But

But the Lord has ſince made it appear that the work was his, and that the reſidue of the Spirit is with him. For I find in the before-cited Preface, that at the concluſion of the year 1731, which was four years after Dr. FRANCK's death, the number of the ſcholars and children in the ſeveral ſchools of the Orphan-houſe amounted to 2300, and the number of ſtudents who inſtructed them to 160. I am further informed by the Reverend Mr. *Zeigenhagen*, the preſent worthy paſtor of the *German* church at St. *James*'s, that the Hoſpital ſtill continues in a very flouriſhing ſtate, and that ſome further additions were made to the buildings but about three years ago.

Many uſeful inſtructions might be deduced from this narrative. What arguments for a providence, what encouragement to prayer, what motives to works of charity, might it yield us! But I have already ſwelled this Preface almoſt beyond all reaſonable bounds, and therefore muſt not inſiſt here on theſe topicks.

I have

I have only to observe further, that the Letter which follows was written by this great and good man about two years before his death, in which we have his opinion and judgment, ripened by age and large experience, concerning *the most useful way of preaching*. And what minister, who is in good earnest concerned to approve himself faithful in his work, to advance the honour of Christ, and do good to souls, would not be glad to consult so great and experienced a master? And who would not pay some considerable deference to the judgment of such an apostolic man, a man so highly honoured of God, as Professor FRANCK was?

The good Professor himself had, it seems, such an opinion of this little piece, as to desire it might be transmitted to posterity. He therefore inserted it entire in a Preface to a quarto volume of Sermons which he published in the year 1726, on purpose, as he there declares, that it might not be lost, as single sheets are apt to be; but that posterity might know his thoughts upon this matter.

ter. And after the end of it, he declares in a very solemn manner, *as in the presence of the Lord*, that what he had thus written was the result of his own experience; and that these rules and directions, which he had given to other ministers, were the same that he had constantly followed and practised upon in the whole course of his own preaching and ministry.

May this publication of them in our own language prove a means, through the blessing of God, of forming many such useful and successful preachers of the gospel in our country, as that holy and excellent man was in his. May many ministers be made wise hereby to win souls to Christ, *to save themselves and them that hear them.* So shall this little, but valuable Treatise *redound through the thanksgivings of many to the glory of God.*

DAVID JENNINGS.

London,
August 24, 1736.

A LETTER TO A FRIEND

Concerning the most useful WAY of

PREACHING.

Honoured and dear Friend,

IN answer to the question which you have proposed to me, *viz. How a faithful minister, who earnestly desires to save and to edify the souls of his hearers, to gain sinners unto Christ, and to inflame their hearts with a growing love to their Saviour, may best adapt his preaching to these excellent purposes?* I can only at present suggest a few things briefly; whereas if I had more leisure, I should choose to write more copiously on so weighty a subject.

1. I must take it for granted that a minister, who sincerely desires and who is likely to do good by his preaching, is such a one, both in heart and in life, as St. *Paul* describes, 2 *Tim.* i. 13, 14. *Who holds fast the*

the form of ſound words (or the pure apoſtolic doctrine) *which he has heard, in faith and love which is in Chriſt Jeſus;* and *who keeps that good thing which has been committed to him by the Holy Ghoſt which dwelleth in him.*

II. It will not a little ſubſerve the good ends propoſed in the queſtion, for a miniſter, very frequently, to lay down in his ſermons the diſtinguiſhing marks and characters both of the converted and of the unconverted, and that with all poſſible plainneſs, that ſo every one of his hearers may be able to judge of his own ſtate, and may know to which of theſe two claſſes he belongs. But then great care muſt be taken that thoſe diſtinguiſhing characters are juſtly drawn: For it may eaſily happen, through a preacher's unſkilfulneſs in this affair, that the unconverted, on the one hand, may be deceived into a good opinion of their preſent ſtate, and may grow thereupon more ſecure and careleſs; and that ſome converted perſons, on the other hand, may be unreaſonably diſquieted and filled with groundleſs and fruitleſs fears. However a prudent miniſter, who has experienced a work of grace upon his own heart, will have no great difficulty ſo to deſcribe it to others, as ſufficiently to guard againſt the miſtakes on both ſides; and to lead both one and the other, by the un-

erring light of ſcripture, into the knowledge of the true ſtate of their own ſouls.

III. For this purpoſe alſo let a miniſter carefully and clearly diſtinguiſh in his preaching, betwixt mere morality and true religion; betwixt the moral honeſt man and the ſound believer, who, from a deep conviction of the depravity of his nature and the errors of his life, has learned to hate ſin from his heart, and lives by the faith of the Son of God. For it is hardly credible what multitudes of perſons there are even in Chriſtian countries, where the goſpel is publicly and faithfully preached, who, though they are wiſe enough in other matters, yet in this are they groſsly ignorant, and thereby miſerably deceive their own ſouls.

IV. And, becauſe this kind of ſelf-deceit is ſo very common, it is highly neceſſary for a miniſter to inſtruct his hearers with all poſſible plainneſs in the duty of ſelf-examination, and very often to exhort them to it; as, more eſpecially to inquire, If ever they were awakened from their natural ſleep in ſin? If they have eſcaped out of the ſnare of the devil? If ever they have had a lively and affecting ſenſe of the corruption of their own hearts, and of the miſery of their natural ſtate? And, in ſhort, whether they have good and ſolid reaſons to conclude that they are regenerate perſons?

ſons? Whether they can find in themſelves the genuine marks of a true converſion to God, and a living faith in Chriſt? *&c.* Or whether, on the other hand, they do not conclude that they are true Chriſtians and in a ſtate of ſalvation, merely from their being moral honeſt men, and their not living in any groſs and ſcandalous ſin? And, perhaps too, from their ſaying prayers, hearing ſermons, and frequenting the places of public worſhip, and from their practiſing ſuch like outward duties of religion? Or again, whether they do not flatter themſelves that their eternal ſtate is ſafe, merely becauſe their lives are not altogether ſo bad as the lives of ſome others?

V. It would alſo be of very conſiderable uſe for a miniſter often to explain, and to ſhew the difference betwixt a legal and an evangelical frame and principle of religion; or betwixt that ſlaviſh fear, by which alone it is that ſome perſons, even of a ſerious turn of mind, are forced and dragged as it were to their duty, and that evangelical newneſs of ſpirit, that filial love to God and delight in his ſervice, which uſually grows and flouriſhes in the ſoul where it is once planted, and which produces a free, unconſtrained, and acceptable religion. This would be an excellent means, not only of awakening ſinners out of their carnal ſecurity, but of turning them

thoroughly unto God, to a holy walk and to a pleaſurable converſe with him, even ſuch as becomes his children. And for this end it is of very great moment, that a miniſter not only inſtruct his hearers what they muſt do, and how they ought to act, but that he alſo labour fully to appriſe and to convince them, by the evidence of ſcripture, of their own native weakneſs and impotency for all that is ſpiritually good; and that he further ſhew them, by the ſame word of truth, from whence they muſt look for, and from whom they may hope to receive, all grace and ſtrength, not only to renew their ſouls in their firſt converſion, but alſo afterwards to enable them to perform every duty, as well of outward as of inward religion. They muſt be told that they can do nothing without Chriſt, according as he has aſſured us, *John* xv. 5. *Without me ye can do nothing*: And again, that by the help of his grace they may do all things, according as St. *Paul* writes, *Phil.* iv. 13. *I can do all things through Chriſt which ſtrengtheneth me.* Thus ſhould goſpel-miniſters conſtantly make it the aim and drift of their preaching, to lead their hearers to Chriſt, and to his grace; to him by *whoſe ſtripes we are healed*, and whoſe blood takes away all the ſins of all that truly repent and believe in the Lord Jeſus; and to him by whoſe *divine power all things are given*

given to us that pertain both to life and godliness, 2 Pet. i. 3. Thus the holy apostles preached; these were the topicks which they insisted much upon; and if their example is not followed in this matter, it will be no wonder if our modern preaching comes vastly short of the success of theirs: And by this means some of our hearers will be in danger of sinking into a mere legal frame and spirit of bondage, while they are pressed to duty and working, but not encouraged by the grace of Christ, nor directed where to look for strength to perform it; and others of them will take up with a false peace, a carnal security, for want of being directed to Christ, who is the only foundation of the sinner's reasonable hope and solid comfort. But on the other hand, when both these points are well explained and duly insisted on, no other means are so powerful to awaken secure sinners, to bring them to Christ, and to settle their souls in solid peace and comfort. Hereby, under the influence of the Spirit of Christ, they find themselves transported as it were into a new life; and now they go on with vigour and pleasure in the practice of universal piety.

VI. It would further be useful, and it is highly necessary that ministers should not only preach up the necessity of conversion, and instruct their hearers to depend on the grace

grace of Chriſt for it, but alſo that they ſhould, very frequently, in their ſermons, explain the nature and the whole progreſs of converſion, ſometimes more largely and diſtinctly, and at other times more briefly, endeavouring thereby to lead their hearers into a true knowledge of the ſtate of their ſouls; and ſhewing them how they muſt repent of their ſins, what they muſt do to be ſaved from their natural miſery and ruin, and, in ſhort, how they may obtain the full ſalvation of the goſpel; that ſo every one may be able to give an anſwer to that moſt important queſtion, *What muſt I do that I may be a child of God and inherit eternal life?* For let a miniſter entertain his hearers with the ſublimeſt doctrines of Chriſtianity, let him alſo declaim againſt ſin and exhort them to their various duties in the moſt earneſt and pathetic manner, and let all be adorned with the fineſt beauties of wit and eloquence; yet, after all, if his ſermons are not ſo contrived and framed as, at the ſame time, to inform the ignorant how they may obtain an intereſt in the goſpel-ſalvation for themſelves, and what means and methods God has appointed for that purpoſe; what will it profit them? No more than a parcel of ſhreds of cloth, of various dyes, though they were of the fineſt thread and livelieſt colours, would ſerve the purpoſe of a man who wants a handſome garment; whereas

whereas a ſermon that informs the ignorant ſinner, not only of the neceſſity of converſion, but alſo how that happy change may certainly be effected in his own ſoul, may not unfitly be compared, in reſpect to its uſefulneſs, to a complete garment, made all of a piece, well fitted to the man's ſhape that wants it, and which he may therefore put on and wear with honour and pleaſure.

But now in order to all this, a miniſter muſt take pains with his own heart, as well as in compoſing his ſermons; he muſt have a zeal for Chriſt, and muſt aim at nothing ſo much as to bring ſinners to him. This ſhould be in ſome meaſure the deſign and drift of every ſermon that he preaches, that ſo if a perſon ſhould happen to hear him but once in all his life, he might, even by means of that one ſermon, get ſome notion of the one thing needful, and be juſt entered at leaſt into the way of ſalvation. For this ſhould every miniſter ſtudy and ſtrive, and for this ſhould he continually pray that God would fill his heart with pious zeal and holy wiſdom, that ſo he may divide the word of truth aright, and miniſter grace unto his hearers.

VII. It might probably make ſome good impreſſions on the minds of the people, was a miniſter pretty often to inculcate, with great plainneſs and ſeriouſneſs, the neceſſity of prayer; and more particularly what

what need they have to pray very earneſtly to the God of grace that he would ſet home his word upon their hearts, that he would bring the good ſeed to perfection in their full and bleſſed conformity to himſelf. And further, ſo great is the ignorance of many perſons concerning the duty of prayer, that they ſeem to have no other notion of it than merely a reading ſome forms out of a prayer-book. This makes it to be as neceſſary, as it would probably be a uſeful thing for a miniſter to lead them, as it were by the hand, into this path of their duty; that is, to explain it to them in a moſt eaſy and familiar manner, to ſhew them that it requires no great art and ſkill to pray acceptably unto God; for they are to ſpeak to him as children to a loving father, they are to ſpread before him their ſorrows and complaints, they are to tell him of the ſtate and condition of their ſouls, juſt as they find and feel it; and they need not be at all ſolicitous about propriety of expreſſion and elegant phraſes in their ſecret prayers; for God regards the ſenſe of the heart, rather than the language of the lips. The ſcriptures themſelves furniſh us with ſeveral examples of ſuch artleſs and yet acceptable prayers. Let a miniſter then diligently inſtruct his hearers how they are, in the firſt place, to get their hearts diſpoſed for prayer; and it may be of uſe too to aſſiſt

and

and furniſh the more ignorant with words and fit expreſſions: But at the ſame time let him inform them, that they need not tie themſelves to uſe thoſe very words, nor any form whatever; but that they ſhould learn to pour out their hearts unto God, in ſuch words by which they can beſt expreſs the real ſentiments and affections of their own ſouls, according to the pſalmiſt, *Pſalm* lxii. 8. *Ye people, pour out your hearts before him.*

VIII. It is further extremely neceſſary that miniſters ſhould very often take occaſion to explain, in their ſermons, that renewing or change of the mind, which is ſo eſſential to all true religion, and which yet, alas! but very few perſons ſeem to underſtand, or indeed to have almoſt any notion of. Nor it is enough to explain that firſt and mighty change, which is at once made in a ſinner at his converſion, when he comes to love that good which before he hated, and to hate that evil which he before loved, when from being an unbeliever he becomes a believer; or when his falſe and dead faith is changed into a true and ſaving one: But that further progreſſive change ſhould alſo be much recommended, in which the Chriſtian muſt be improving to the very end of his life, which St. *Paul* refers to, 2 *Cor.* iii. 18. *But now* (the veil which was upon the heart being taken away, and the Spirit of the Lord having

ing taken up his dwelling in it, verſes 16, 17.) *we all with open face beholding as in a glaſs the glory of the Lord, are changed into the ſame image from glory to glory, even by the ſpirit of the Lord.* Hereby the mind is more and more renewed, the Chriſtian grows up in the ſpirit and temper of Chriſt, and his lovely image is drawn upon the ſoul in fairer lines every day than another.

IX. It is of conſiderable moment alſo, that the whole faith and duty of a Chriſtian be repreſented in its moſt amiable and attractive light, that ſo ſinners may be won to religion upon a full conviction, that if they would do well for themſelves and obtain true peace and comfort, the ſhorteſt, the ſureſt, and indeed the only way is to turn in good earneſt from ſin to God and holineſs; and that religion is by no means a grievous and melancholy thing, which any man need be afraid of, but full of pleaſure and greatly deſirable even for its own ſake, and though it calls us, indeed, to a preſent combat, and requires us to fight and ſtrive againſt ſin, yet this is but in order to peace and to a certain victory, which will much more than recompenſe the toils of the way.

X. It were much to be wiſhed that miniſters would not take up more of their ſermons than needs muſt in explaining their text,

text, but rather, after as short an explication of it as is sufficient to lead their hearers into the true sense and meaning (which must by no means be neglected), hasten to the application; and in that, let a minister address himself to his hearers with a becoming seriousness and earnestness; let him apply his subject both to saints and sinners, to the converted and to the unconverted, in order to awaken the secure and careless, and to build up true believers in their faith and holiness. Experience would soon shew that this is by far the more profitable way, than to spend almost the whole discourse, as some do, in explaining their text and subject, and then close with a very short application, because the time is gone.

XI. It were also greatly to be wished, that those under-shepherds of the flocks of Christ would make it more designedly and zealously the purpose of their preaching to bring sinners to him, who is the great Shepherd of the sheep; that they would strive by the most winning arguments they can possibly use, and especially by such as the grace of the gospel will naturally suggest, to persuade and even to compel them to come to him. As the hen when she lights on a few crumbs of grains of corn, how earnestly does she invite her brood to come in and share the treasure with her! she will

by no means be ſatisfied, nor leave off calling them, till they come. Thus did our bleſſed Saviour; how graciouſly did he call and invite ſinners to come to him in the days of his perſonal miniſtry upon earth! As *Matth.* xi. 28. *Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you reſt*, &c. Again, *John* vii. 37, 38. *If any man thirſt, let him come to me and drink: He that believeth on me, as the ſcripture ſaith, out of his belly ſhall flow rivers of living water.* And much to the ſame purpoſe we find him ſpeaking in ſeveral other places. Thus alſo we hear the prophet *Iſaiah*, in the Old Teſtament, inviting ſinners unto Chriſt, *Iſa.* lv. 1. *Ho, every one that thirſteth, come ye to the waters*, &c. and thus St. *Paul*, in the New Teſtament, 2 *Cor.* v. 11. *We beſeech you in Chriſt's ſtead be ye reconciled to God.* And thus doth the apoſtle *John* over and over in his divine writings. Remarkable to this purpoſe alſo are the words of our bleſſed Saviour concerning *Jeruſalem*, *Matth.* xxiii. 37. *How often would I have gathered thy children, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wing!* Chriſt called ſinners to come to *himſelf*, as their proper Lord and Maſter, as their only Redeemer and Saviour; whereas *we*, ſays St. *Paul*, *preach not ourſelves, but Chriſt Jeſus the Lord*, 2 *Cor.* iv. 5. and therefore we endeavour to bring ſinners not to ourſelves, but to him. But now in order

order to this, and that a minister may be thus happily successful in his preaching, he must not only sincerely love his people and have an affectionate concern for their salvation, but he must be an ardent lover of Christ too; he must wish, and desire, and covet nothing so much as to bring all that hear him to Christ, to deliver every one of them, as it were into his gracious arms, could he but persuade them to be so happy; that thus they may learn, even by the example of their minister, to love the Lord Jesus.

XII. For this purpose it is farther requisite that a minister should very often take occasion to display, in the most lively colours that he can, the excellency and glory of Christ's person, the kindness of his heart, and the exceeding riches of his grace, both as he is God and Man, as he is now a glorious triumphant Saviour, as well as once he sustained and executed the same office in a humbled and suffering state. And that he further inform his hearers, what excellent blessings are treasured up in Christ, to be bestowed on all his friends and people, that so they may be drawn to him by a principle of desire and love, that they may most willingly give him their hearts, and that so it may be the breathing of their souls, and the matter of their most earnest prayer to Christ,

that he would be pleased to manifest his love to them, that he would *shed it abroad in their hearts by his holy Spirit*, Rom. v. 5. that he would more and more reveal to them the glory of his majesty, that he would impress and affect their minds with a lively sense of it, that so they may yet more and more love and honour him their heavenly Spouse, by whom it is that they have, and that they farther hope for access to, and acceptance with the Father, and with whom they also hope to dwell for ever and ever.

XIII. The love of Christ ought to be much more insisted on by preachers than what is commonly done; because when we apply to ourselves in a right manner his passion, death, and atonement, his merits, and that purchase of salvation which he hath made for us, the knowledge of his love to us, and of our pardon and justification through faith in his blood, is the truest spring and most powerful attractive of our love to him. Now the more we love Christ, and that for this very reason, *because he first loved us*, the better will every other branch of our religion flourish, every other grace and every duty will then flow from its proper fountain; and therefore the more a minister endeavours to instil this principle of sacred love into the hearts of his hearers, the more comfortable success will

will he probably see of his labours, in their spiritual improvement and growing obedience to the gospel.

But especially, and in the first place, let every minister look to his own heart; and see to it that he himself loves Christ fervently, lest he should be as *the sounding brass and as the tinkling cymbal*, which the apostle speaks of, 1 *Cor.* xiii. 1. And besides, without a sincere love to Christ in his soul, there will be little probability of his recommending him effectually to the love of others. It is not enough for him to preach a great many sermons upon the love of Christ, and to exhort his hearers to love him; for if his own heart is not warmed with this sacred love, his discourses on that subject will be apt to be cold and lifeless, and therefore unprofitable and fruitless. Nothing could be more pertinently answered in a few words, to one that asked another, How he might learn to be a good and a useful preacher? than this, *Si vultum sanctum Christum*, You must learn to be a zealous lover of Christ.

But then let it be further noted, that sincere love to Christ will always express itself not only in words, but by suitable or correspondent actions. So our Saviour has taught us, *John* xv. 14. *Ye are my friends*, said he, *if ye do whatsoever I command you*; i. e. this is the best and most substantial

evidence of your sincere friendship, and that you truly love me.

XIV. I reckon also the duties of self-denial and weanedness from the world and its carnal pleasures, and, in short, from all the present things of sense and time, to be among those more important and necessary subjects which ministers should often preach upon, oftener indeed than most of them do. These are subjects which our Saviour Christ, when he was a preacher upon earth, very much insisted upon in his sermons, as you may see particularly, *Matth.* xvi. 24, 25, 26. *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me.* Luke xiv. 26. *If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother*, &c. *yea, and his own life also, i. e.* in comparison of me, *he cannot be my disciple.* And how needful are these subjects now. For alas! how many persons are there, who can talk well about Christ and religion, nay, who carry a fair appearance of virtue and godliness, and who perform many outward duties with reputation and honour, and yet not having learned to deny themselves, their love of the world not being sufficiently mortified, they are easily overcome in a day of trial, and sacrifice their religion and their souls to their worldly interest. Let self-denial then be earnestly recommended, and that not merely as a moral virtue or philosophical attainment,

attainment, I mean not upon such principles only as the Heathen moralists used to insist upon; but let it be recommended and urged as a Christian grace, as that which flows chiefly from love to Christ, even such a love as will make us ready to deny ourselves the pleasures, riches, and honours of this world, all manner of sensual gratifications, and our very lives themselves, nay, for his sake, as Christ not only expects but requires of us, *Matth.* xvi. 25.

XV. Though the diligent reading of the scriptures themselves, even the inspired writings of the prophets and apostles, and the very words of our Saviour Christ, should be chiefly recommended, as they are undoubtedly far preferable to any other books of mere human composure; yet besides these a minister may very profitably recommend to his hearers some other good books of religion, both ancient and modern, to be read by them at home in their own closets or families: Such books, I mean as are written in a truly evangelical strain, and with a spirit of lively devotion and piety, which would be no inconsiderable means, both of preserving and nourishing the fire of divine love in their hearts. I might mention by way of instance, *Martin Statius's Lutherus Redivivus*, which is nothing else but an abridgment of *Luther's* works, in which the most considerable pas-

sages

ſages are collected into a narrow room, and ſuch paſſages more eſpecially, as have the moſt direct and powerful tendency to awaken and excite the minds of men to lively practical religion. However, I mention this but as one inſtance, out of a great many very excellent and uſeful books which the providence of God has now furniſhed his church withal, and which we ought to account as a precious treaſure to it. And further, let not any miniſter think that it is the people only who are to be profited in their ſouls by the reading ſuch good books, while all the uſe that he is concerned to make of them for himſelf, is only to form his ſtyle by reading them, or to borrow thoughts from them, or it may be to ſteal ſermons out of them (which is ſhamefully the practice of too many preachers), but he ſhould read them chiefly and in the firſt place, with a view to his own ſpiritual edification. He ſhould endeavour ſo to uſe and improve the gifts which God has beſtowed on other men, as that his own ſoul may be the better for them, as well as the ſouls of the people to whom he preaches.

XVI. Once more, let faithful miniſters by no means forget to recommend it to their hearers, that they would familiarly acquaint themſelves and converſe with ſerious, lively, and growing Chriſtians, and with ſuch more eſpecially as excel in the gift and

ſpirit

spirit of prayer; for as a live coal kindles another that is cold and dead, so will the savoury discourse, the fervent prayers, and the holy conversation of warm and lively Christians, be a probable means of kindling the same fire of divine love in the souls of dead sinners; or at least of nourishing and improving the sacred flame in the hearts of their most intimate Christian friends. Ministers should therefore do all they can to promote such Christian conversation amongst the more serious part of their hearers: Observing however the rules of necessary prudence, particularly that of the apostle, 1 *Cor.* xiv. 40. *Let all things be done decently and in order.* They should exhort them as St. *Paul* does the *Colossians*, Col. iii. 16. *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto the Lord*; to which pious purpose that large and rich treasure of sacred hymns, both ancient and modern, with which God has graciously blessed his church, is not a little conducive, for which therefore we are bound to render him immortal praises.

Thus I have briefly answered your question, and given you my thoughts on the most useful way of preaching. May God, for Christ's sake, attend what I have written.

written with his effectual bleſſing. To him I would now humbly offer up the following prayer:

" O Lord God! give, I beſeech thee, " both now and at all times hereafter to thy " church paſtors and teachers after thine " own heart, even ſuch as ſhall bring the " ſheep of Chriſt into his fold, and who, " through the influence of thy good Spirit, " ſhall feed them with ſaving knowledge " and underſtanding. Make every preacher " of thy word to know and always to re- " member, that *neither is he that planteth " any thing*, neither *he that watereth*, but " thou art all in all, who alone canſt give " the increaſe. Let none of them vainly " preſume on their own ſkill and ability " to do any good by their preaching, and " obtain any good ſucceſs; but let them " all humbly wait upon thee, and by fer- " vent daily prayer let them ſeek for and " obtain the aids of thy grace, to enable " them to diſpenſe the word of life, and " let thy bleſſing render their preaching " happily ſucceſsful to the ſouls of thoſe " that hear them. *Amen.*"

May 25, 1725.

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